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VEXAT CENSURA COLUMBAS.

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Mr. RUSSELL,

IT is pity that while we have ſo many Patriots contending for the liberties of our country, we have no friend to ſtand up for its credit. We are told not only by ſtrangers who come occaſionally among us, but by our own people on their return from abroad what extravagant ideas are formed of our provincial character in other parts of the world: Inſomuch that I knew an inſtance not long ſince of a Gentleman who when about making a ſecond viſit to a foreign land did not chuſe to go without carrying ſome ſubſtantial evidence of his loyalty. Whence is it my fellow-citizens that our characters are thus debaſed? If the aſperſions are juſt, let us remove them by amendment: If they are unjuſt, let us inquire whence they ariſe, and if we find that they are owing to individuals among us, let us diſown their conduct, point them out as enemies to ſociety, and diſcard them our confidence: Until we do this, the imputations upon us will be accounted juſt, and we muſt be content to bear them. And is it not better that one man ſhould periſh or a few be ſtripped of their political exiſtence than that the whole community ſhould ſtink in the noſtrils of our neighbours and be deſpiſed? Were the writings of *Mucius*, *Candidus*, and *Determinatus*, and others their aſſociates treated with the contempt they deſerve among ourſelves as they are among ſtrangers, we ſhould not be thus marked and diſtinguiſhed as a turbulent factious people: It is from ſuch writers as theſe that we derive the imputation. They have gone on ſo long without contradiction, that they ſeem at length to believe themſelves every miſrepreſentation or untruth that they think will anſwer their purpoſe, and ſcruple not to publiſh them to the world. Were they to ſign their proper names to all the ſcandalous

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abuſe they are from week to week publiſhing under aſſumed ſignatures they would be abhorred as the peſts of ſociety. Poſterity will know them and judge impartially. I fear we ſhall know too ſoon ourſelves, that we ought not to yield theſe men our confidence. The time alſo may be near at hand, which will diſcover whether the *veterans* which ſome of them have lately recommended to us are the fitteſt inſtruments to effect our deliverance from the burdens we complain of.

It is but of late that any one dare to take up the pen, much leſs did any Printer dare to ſet his preſs in oppoſition to theſe ſons of liberty who had engroſſed the boaſted liberty of the preſs to themſelves and their Partizans. The preſs now begins to reſume its native freedom: Your own may boaſt its ſucceſs, notwithſtanding the illiberal efforts of a Party to break up your Undertaking. If we compare the writers on each ſide the queſtion, the quirks and evaſions, the falſe colouring and miſrepreſentations of ſome I have already named, and of the common herd of ſcriblers with the manly ſenſe of the judicious *Chronus* and *Freeman*, the ravings and ſcoldings on one ſide with the calm and diſpaſſionate reaſonings on the other, every candid reader will at leaſt be prejudiced in favour of the latter; and if he does not eſpouſe the ſame cauſe, will wiſh to ſee his own as well ſupported.

From the abuſe of the preſs it is that ſtrangers take up an ill opinion of us; and as this abuſe is chiefly thrown out againſt men in authority they look upon us as diſaffected to government. Governor Tryon has had the moſt ill-natured things ſaid of him and the moſt harſh and ſevere epithets applied to him by ſome of theſe writers, for ſuppreſſing a dangerous rebellion in North-Carolina. *He executed* this ſervice with the full conſent of that government and with their own militia entirely, and has had the higheſt encomiums on his prudent and ſpirited conduct from the government there who were certainly the beſt judges in the affair; and ſince his entering upon the adminiſtration of the government of New-York, he has received the compliments of his Majeſty's Council and of the Aſſembly on this fortunate event; their addreſſes muſt be ſuppoſed to be founded either upon a full conviction of the importance of the ſervice, or upon the groſſeſt proſtitution of honour and conſcience: We cannot ſuppoſe the latter of Gentlemen known to be their country's friends, and men of honour. This very abuſe of Governor Tryon muſt effectually take off at Carolina and New-York at leaſt the edge of all that abuſe they are continually throwing out againſt Governor Hutchinſon: They will naturally ſuppoſe there is no more foundation for the one than the other. It is enough with theſe ſcriblers that theſe Governors are Crown-Officers; but that they are paid too by the Crown is unpardonable.

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With regard to themſelves, while innocent, a ſovereign neglect is all that theſe ſcandals deſerve; but ſome regard is due to the publick; and it is not beſt that one honeſt man ſhould believe that ill of another which he who ſpeaks it does not believe himſelf. Such abuſe diſgraces letters, it diſgraces the government where it is iſſued, ſome regard is therefore due to the province, and in the name of my fellow-citizens I do hereby diſavow all illiberal diſreſpect to government, and to the Servants of the Crown; and do declare that all ſuch abuſe proceeds intirely from the malignant diſpoſition of a few individuals not having the fear of its evil conſequences before their eyes; from the diſappointed hopes of a few others, and from the wiſhes of ſome Younkers to riſe into importance.

After this it may be expected that I acquit myſelf of all baſe and ſordid views in appearing in print. As a member of the community I own I have a regard to my own intereſt, for I mean hereby to acquit the body of the people, and myſelf as one of them, of every thing that may be charged upon them that is derogatory to the character of peaceable loyal ſubjects, although it be at the expence of a few individuals whom I would willingly reclaim; and I do declare that I aim at no other place but that of

CENSOR.

From the MASSACHUSETTS GAZETTE, *Feb. 6, 1772.*

To the FREEHOLDERS of BOSTON.

Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur.

AMID the murmurs of diſcontent and popular clamor, the invidious cry of taxation and penal laws of Great Britain, ſuffer the miſerable lamentations of this city, the cries of the poor and indigent, the widow and orphan, to impreſs the minds of my fellow-citizens, with tender feelings, let them religiouſly reflect upon the miſery of our own internal *police*, the burden aſſeſſed upon this once flouriſhing and opulent city—Taxes which will be levied in a ſhort ſpace of time upon perſons of every diſtinction in the town of Boſton. Think of the mechanic, artiſan, and tradeſman, who have with great patience born the infelicity and fatality of the late unhappy times, been deluded by the oily, flattering tongues of a few rapacious demagogues, to renounce the common neceſſaries of life, and pale want and miſery, in their ſolitary habitations, have been ſubſtituted for milk and honey. Remember, my beloved fellow citizens, the commercial trade hath been violently expelled for four years laſt from this metropolis, *(to other towns)* the only temporary ſupport and exiſtence of its inhabitants, and to the deſtruction of many worthy and good families

families of every rank and quality. As a compenſation of thoſe cruel ſufferings, we are loaded with an inſupportable town-tax. Rouſe yourſelves from your lethargic dreams! Deſpiſe the ſecret whiſperings and ſoft tales of deluſion. Demand with manly decency and ſpirited firmneſs of mind, free from the foam of enthuſiaſm or the tincture of licentiouſneſs, that proper enquiry be made of the late amazing town-tax. You have an abſolute, uncontroulable right to know whether you are to be loaded with taxes for charges not warranted by law.—Demand alſo in a lawful manner whether you are to be ſubjugated to the internal taxation of this city for the manœvres of any publick defaulters. Be not intimidated by the grimace of diſappointed ambition. Inſiſt upon a nice diſquiſition of the expences and charges that have ariſen in this city for ſeveral years paſt, and cauſed every citizen to be loaded with ſuch enormous town contributions. You have an unalienable right to demand payment of all ſums of money borrowed of this town and cauſe the ſame ſums to be depoſited in the hands of the Town-Treaſurer, and thereby the weight of future taxations will be leſſened. Examine alſo whether any ſums of money are ſtill unpaid and arrear to the town for the deficiency of any town officer prior to the year 1767. Whether the ſchedule of debts of former town-taxes exhibited by a late public officer had not previouſly (conſiderable part thereof) been diſcharged? Whether any ſums of money on that account are ſtill unpaid, and the inhabitants of this city taxed for the deficiency thereof? My fellow-citizens, hearken to the voice of cool, diſpaſſionate reaſon, which ſurmount declamation. Make ſtrict inquiſition of the tranſactions of the public lotteries, licenced by this govrnment. I humbly conceive it will be highly expedient for the freeholders and other inhabitants of this city legally convened, to examine thoſe important matters with ſerioufneſs and great deliberation. Let us cure our own political defects, previous to the regulation of the ordinances of the Britiſh Parliament. Curb the aſpiring genius of a few daring deſperadoes, who would enſlave this town, under the falſe glare of patriotiſm, and build the monuments of their fame and fortune upon its ruin. Attend my beloved fellow-citizens at the next *March* convocation of every rank and condition. In town-meeting legally aſſembled, ſcrutinize and minutely examine the incidental charges of the town, that have cauſed the ſum of £.8000 lawful money to be aſſeſſed and finally will be levied upon its inhabitants. An amazing tax indeed! If you will not quit the pleaſures and delights of the town for a few moments, and attend public buſineſs, and prevent any future enormous taxations, ceaſe complaint—Cloſe your eyes and be deceived.

I know the ſons of diſcontent and rapine will treat theſe requiſitions with their uſual air of deriſion. Time will come when the maſk muſt be thrown aſide, and the affected ——— appear in their true colours. MARCUS AURELIUS.